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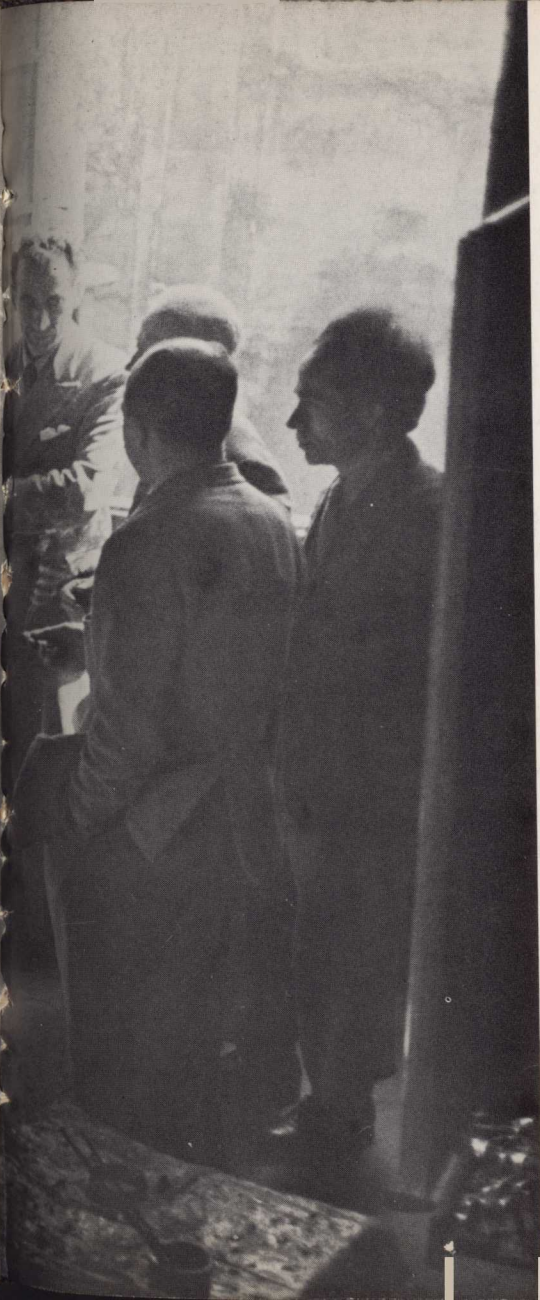
ROBERT CAPA

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Pablo Picasso in his studio with a group
of friends in liberated Paris,
Sept. 1944

PICASSO

by Robert Capa (1950)

The day after the liberation of Paris, a few of us old Parisians who returned with the American army forgot about the war and set out in the streets to make sure that nothing was missing from our city. We were happy that the buildings were still there, and we were sad that the people and the life we knew was missing around them.

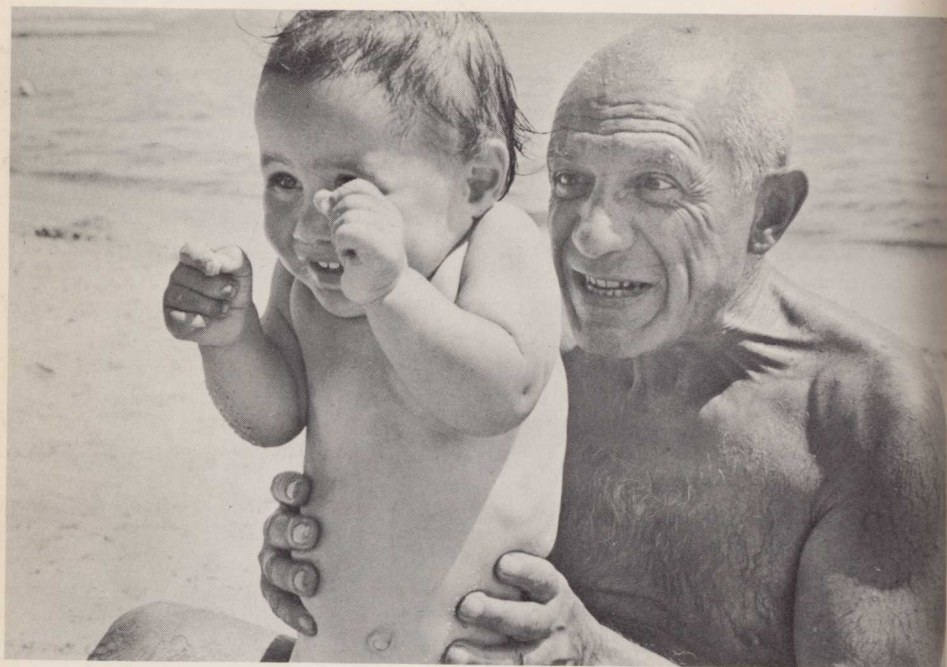
Then I went to search for a different landmark of Paris which was called PICASSO. I climbed the turning stairs in a small house on the Rue des Grand Augustin, banged on the door and found Picasso—somewhat older but far livelier than anything else in Paris. The studio was filled with unknown new paintings and known old faces. The Spanish Republicans who had survived one more war were there. Many French writers and artists, still in the uniforms of the resistance, and a few young English and American soldiers were milling around the paintings. Ernest Hemingway was there too. He brought presents for his old friend—hand grenades, army food and whiskey.

Through Picasso's windows I could see the familiar rooftops and chimneys; on his window sill was a dried up tomato plant, his favorite model during the war years. I found that he looked extremely well for a Republican-Spanish painter after three years of German occupation. We gave each other a Spanish-French-Hungarian-American "hug". Then he was posing happily and I took pictures.

Two years later I was on the French Riviera and driving by the seashore of Golfe Juan. I recognized Pablo on the terrace of a bistro. It was a small café of sailors, and the Picasso family was sitting undisturbed in a corner. Pablo was brown and his eyes were shining, Françoise was beautiful, and the baby in the crib was making a lot of noise. The family had the holiness of the small French bourgeois. I was offered a glass of wine and a good lobster. Pablo asked me how life was, which was good; Françoise asked me how the lobster was, which was also good; and the baby stole my sun glasses. That summer I had many lunches at the table. I took a few pictures and there—it was a simple affair. Pablo was a painter, Françoise was also a painter and a mother, Claude was a baby and I was their photographer.

One of the evenings when we stopped in the bistro of Vallauris, the small village where Picasso's house is and where everyone makes a living from ceramics, I asked the owner of the bistro between many rounds what he thought of Picasso. He said, "He's a Communist, but he brought a lot of business to Vallauris." Near to us one of the old pottery makers of Vallauris who was drinking his pastis butted in, "What

difference does it make what Picasso says or thinks he is? If the sun says he is a Communist it is not going to be warmer in Moscow and colder on the Côte d'Azur." All this added up to a very pleasant summer.



Picasso holding his son Claude, 1951
